

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9110

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 19614

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MILI VS

SUBJ: MR-4 ASSESSMENT OF VC/NVA COUNTRY-WIDE PLANS

FOLG TEL SENT ACTION SAIGON INFO DAO SAIGON FM CAN THO 16 NOV73

REPEATED FYINFO

QUOTE

CAN THO 0831

1. MR 4 G-2 LTC LE NGUYEN BINH NOVEMBER 12 GAVE CON GEN RLO PERSONNEL HIS ASSESSMENT OF VC/NVA COUNTRYWIDE PLANS FOR THE NEAR TERM. BINH SAID HE HAD PRESENTED THIS ASSESSMENT AT AN MR 4 COMMANDERS CONFERENCE THE PREVIOUS DAY. BINH FORESEES A MAJOR COORDINATED VC/NVA OFFENSIVE THROUGHOUT VIETNAM IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

2. BINH SAID ALL AVAILABLE INTELLIGENCE INDICATES A MAJOR VC/NVA OFFENSIVE SOON. HE CLAIMED THE OTHER SIDE IS CAPABLE OF STAGING ATTACKS AT ANY TIME ON THE LEVEL OF THE 1968 TET OFFENSIVE OR THE SPRING 1972 (NGUYEN HUE) OFFENSIVE. BINH SAID VC/NVA FORCES IN MR 1, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE ONCE AGAIN AT COMBAT STRENGTH, HAVING REPLACED PERSONNEL AND MATERIAL LOSSES INCURRED IN LAST YEAR'S OFFENSIVE.

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3. BINH SAID THE VC/NVA TIMETABLE IS KEYED TO ITS COMBAT CAPABILITY IN MR 1, AND THAT THE SEIZURE OF BOTH HUE AND QUANG TRI CITY WILL BE PRIME OBJECTIVES. IN MR 2, ENEMY FORCES WILL TRY TO SEVER THE COUNTRY BY SEIZING AND CONTROLLING A STRIP FROM THE CAMBODIAN BORDER TO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA, POSSIBLY BETWEEN PLEIKU AND QUI NHON. IN MR 3, ENEMY FORCES WILL ATTEMPT A PUSH AGAINST SAIGON. IN MR 4, THE VC/NVA WILL TRY TO TIE DOWN ARVN FORCES TO PREVENT GVN MOVES TO REINFORCE ARVN UNITS FARTHER NORTH. BINH SAID HE FORESEES NO MAJOR ENEMY ATTEMPT TO SEIZE AND HOLD IMPORTANT DELTA TOWNS, NOR DOES HE BELIEVE THE VC/NVA WILL COMMIT ANY OUTSIDE TROOPS TO THE DELTA FOR THE OFFENSIVE.

4. BINH SAID THAT JGS SAIGON ESTIMATES THAT NORTH VIETNAM MAY COMMIT AIRCRAFT TO AN OFFENSIVE IN THE SOUTH, BUT BELIEVES THAT VNAF AND GVN AIR DEFENSES WILL MAKE THE ENEMY AIR THREAT A MINIMAL ONE.

5. BINH SAID THE VC/NVA TIMETABLE IS KEYED NOT ONLY TO THEIR OWN CAPABILITIES BUT IS CLOSELY TIED TO WORLD-WIDE DEVELOPMENTS. HE SAID ENEMY STRATEGISTS FAVOR A QUICK MOVE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS AND CURRENT AMERICAN DOMESTIC INSTABILITY. HE ADDED THAT US POLICYMAKERS HAVE FALSELY CONVINCED THEMSELVES THAT THERE IS A REAL PEACE IN VIETNAM, AND ESTIMATED THAT THIS SENSE OF FALSE SECURITY IS A FURTHER INVITATION TO ENEMY EXPLOITATION.

6. BINH SAID RECENT ENEMY ATTACKS ON BU PRONG AND BU BONG RANGER BASES IN MR 2 AND THE MAJOR ATTACK BY FIRE ON BIEN HOA AIRBASE WERE PREPARATORY MOVES TO WEAKEN THE GVN. HE ANTICIPATED FURTHER ATTACKS ON MAJOR ARVN SUPPORT BASES AND AMMUNITION DEPOTS TO DEplete ARVN STOCKPILES PRIOR TO THE BEGINNING OF THE OFFENSIVE.

7. COMMENT: LTC BINH SEEMS TO BASE HIS ANALYSIS ON PERCEIVED VC/NVA CAPABILITIES AND PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES TO THEM OF A GENERAL OFFENSIVE CQW. HE CITED NO KNOWLEDGE OF ACTUAL VC/NVA INTENTIONS.

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UNQUOTE.
APPLING

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NNN

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